

The Lord's chosen Servant must endure agony and tremendous sorrow to atone for the sins of many. His sufferings, however, will bring righteousness and redemption to the people.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah: 52:13-53:12

See, my servant shall prosper; he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high. Just as there were many who were astonished at him --so marred was his appearance, beyond human semblance, and his form beyond that of mortals--so he shall startle many nations; kings shall shut their mouths because of him; for that which had not been told them they shall see, and that which they had not heard they shall contemplate.

Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces he was despised, and we held him of no account.

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon

him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb with the rich, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain. When you make his life an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. Out of his anguish he shall see light; he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.

Psalm 22: 1-2, 7-8, 14-21 (*said*)BCP 610

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *

and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?

² O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *

by night as well, but I find no rest.

scorned by all and despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me laugh me to scorn; *

they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,

⁸ "He trusted in the Lord; let him deliver him; *

let him rescue him, if he delights in him."

¹⁴ I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; *

my heart within my breast is melting wax.

¹⁵ My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; *

and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.

¹⁶ Packs of dogs close me in, and gangs of evildoers circle around me; *

they pierce my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.

¹⁷ They stare and gloat over me; *

they divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.

¹⁸ Be not far away, O Lord; *

you are my strength; hasten to help me.

¹⁹ Save me from the sword, *

my life from the power of the dog.

²⁰ Save me from the lion's mouth, *

my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.

²¹ I will declare your Name to my brethren; *

in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

Under the terms of the Old Covenant, continuous sacrifice was required to atone for sin. In the New Covenant, however, Christ's own self-offering pays the penalty for sin.

A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews: 4:14–16; 5:7-9

Since then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.

Reader: The Word of the Lord.